journey

JULY 1984

In the June 1984 issue of Journey, Steve Pieters said, "We believe in a God of life. That means that life goes on, even in the face of death. It means that we can face our deaths, our mortality, and still go on dancing and enjoying our friends. It means to me that I believe in fairies, in magic, in healing and miracles! It means that we are a people of hope, even when that hope is as nonsensical as tap dancing. As a fool for Christ, I can say, 'The doctors told me I have aids. But I'm still dancing. I'm still hoping.' " See "aids: A Gay Man's Health Experience, Part II," page 6.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Nancy Radclyffe

Collective Writer and Senior Chaplain

MINISTRY OF MUSIC AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

Nothing my spouse does surprises me. Well, almost nothing. The other day I found her typing for one clergyperson who is all thumbs when it comes to such endeavors. The following words jumped off the paper at me and caused me to question the project.

> But we were gentle among you, even as nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.
>
> I Thessalonians 2:7,8

This passage really intrigued me and I questioned what she was preparing. She shared that she was helping to prepare for a gathering of sisters and brothers involved in the Ministry of Music and the Performing Arts and the above passage had been selected as the theme of the meeting in order to encourage a focus and support on the ministry, as well as, the performance.

...because ye were dear unto us. To be truthful my first reaction was not what it should have been. I had never really stopped to think that I was dear to anyone in the music departments of my previous pastorates...I found myself thinking back how I thought not of them having shared their souls as it says in Thessalonians but having tried my patience on more than one occasion.

How many times have you forgotten the value of such ministry and turned your attention to the cost, frustration and yes, even the controversy that would be blown out of proportion if a new song was used or words changed? Rather embarrassed I thought back to a few meetings in my previous pastorates where I had wanted to cancel all music, at all services, for all times... and I did not! Praise God!

Not being a musical type, I have failed at times to be understanding of sisters and brothers in this special and annointed ministry. However, I have never failed to be blessed abundantly. My commitment has been strengthened and my pastorates have increased in quality and quantity because of the music drama shared by our people.

Yet I still hear rumblings from many sides that the Mininstry of Music and the Performing Arts is really only the packaging to make the preacher sound better. Well thank God we have something available to make our preaching sound better but that is insignificant in comparison to the number of brothers and sisters who have been led into a saving relationship with Christ by these devoted servants of the Gospel.

It is up to each of us to encourage the growth and development of this very blessed ministry. We have to tear down the walls of complacency about accepting less that the best in our budgets, start searching out individuals to come forward and share their talents, i.e., keyboard, crafts, administration, prayer partners. The Ministry of Music and the Performing Arts is more than organists and dancers. It is an opportunity to all who want to participate in the Great Commission. The end result of worship has hours of behind the scene preparation. Are we only involved and aware for a few fleeting minutes?

I challenge you in the pulpits and pews to try to come up with a ministry as exciting to a soul as a vocalist singing "Because You live, I can face tomorrow" or a dancer swaying in praise and adoration before the Throne of Grace or an orchestra praying a whisper sound that transcends the heavens and breaks into the Mind of God like a mighty storm or a congregation of children all ages choking back the tears to "Jesus Loves Me" or actors on the altar sharing in the Life of Christ or the sounds of an organ bidding us farewell to go out into the world to share the Good News. A challenge to the faint hearted but an every week happening in UFMCC.

Perhaps the next time you hear sound coming from the piano or movements from the rehearsal hall or have to vote on expending funds from an already tight budget, you will reflect when you were the one receiving the ministry.

Although the theme at the opening of this article was only two verses from I Thessolonians, I believe if you open your Bible you will continue to read verses that equally uplift and explain the value of our many beautiful sisters and brothers who give of their time as Ministers of Music and the Performing Arts.

> For ye remember, sisters and brothers, our labour and travail...Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted every one of you, as a mother and father doth their children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto God's realm and glory...When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us... not as people, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.
>
> I Thessalonians 2

AMEN!

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journey

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National Council

The meeting after

National Council of Churches Meets In Louisville, KY

by Nancy Wilson
Collective Writer

The National Council of the Churches of Christ held their semi-annual meeting this May in Louisville, Kentucky.

For those of us in MCC, it was like a "morning after" experience. Mostly folds seemed surprised, relieved/glad that we were present for the meeting after the vote to "postpone indefinitely" our application for membership. Some were distant. Some were not at all sure why we were there.

It was a "low energy" meeting for the most part. The Council is in th midst of some major shifts, politically. A "Presidential Panel" has been exploring long-range goals, including structural changes (sound familiar?--shades of GSS!) In addition, this coming fall they will elect a new General Secretary (Dr. Claire Randall is retiring) and a new President. Also, a comprehensive no-nonsense policy on "Racial Justice" is in the wings. The Methodists were particularly exhausted after having returned from their quadrennial General Conference in Baltimore which passed a negative church ruling on ordination of Gays and Lesbians.

The Council is really in a kind of identity crisis--the kind that can produce lots of anxiety and back-peddling, or lots of creativity and new approaches to the ecumenical adventure. It was our application, among other issues, that heightened the existing tensions, divisions and questions about the nature of the ecumenical movement as it applies to the NCC.

Our issue did come up again-with it the few heated moments of this meeting. Apparently no one is still absolutely sure "where" our application is (ie: is it archival, on the desk of the Constituent Membership Committee, in the hands of the Executive Committee, back in our lap, etc.!). A panel of parliamentarians is going to be convened to resolve this thorny issue....

Meanwhile, a three-person panel of the Council will be working on a process for continuing dialogue which will be offered to the Governing Board for approval this coming November.

A new triennium (beginning in 1985) will mean that about one third of the Governing Board will be brand new. New faces and names, new people to witness to about MCC.

The highlight of this meeting in Louisville, for me, at least, was the presence of Sandi Robinson and her lover, Rev. LaPaula Turner (Pastor of MCC-Columbus). Sandi and LaPaula managed to be the first MCC'rs to sit in on the "minority caucus" and to really gain the attention, respect and admiration of many Black delegates, who for the most part have been able to dismiss MCC as a white Church representing a white issue Gays and Lesbians in the Church).

It was also a very welcome surprise to have Chuck Shields (Deacon and Worship Coordinator of MCC-Dayton Parish) and Jan Russell (Deacon from MCC-Dayton) visiting with us also.

I took an evening off from the meetings to visit our church in Louisville. Our church there is alive and well and growing, and excited to hear about the growth of the Fellowship and our ecumenical witness. It is a comfort to know that wherever the NCC hold their meetings, there will be a friendly MCC nearby!

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OPENING BLIND EYES

A Response To Jerry Falwell

by Chris Glaser
Collective Writer

The gospel according to Jerry Falwell: Acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other diseases are God's way of spanking us.

The Gospel according to St. John: And (Jesus') disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him."

While Jerry Falwell's suggestions that AIDS is God's way of punishing the Gay male community contains all the pastoral comfort of one of the speeches of Job's friends, the one he claims to follow avoided placing blame in the midst of the suffering he witnessed. Jesus didn't look for sin; rather, he looked for faith. Most of the healings recorded in Christian scriptures reveal the faith of those he touched. Forgiveness for sin common to all humanity was a part of those healings, but, in the midst of suffering, Jesus looked for faith. In Jesus's response to his disciples regarding the blind man, Jesus apparently broke with a primitive tradition associating physical disabilities or illnesses with sin.

People may have been surprised if not dismayed at Falwell's conclusion about AIDS and other diseases, yet his conclusion is based on assumptions commonly held by the majority of Americans. To attack Falwell's conclusion we must attack our own mistaken theological assumptions.

No matter how theologically liberated we may believe ourselves to be, in an attic closet of our minds persists the image of God as a punitive force, a punishing parent or Father. This is a god of wrath, not of love; a god of vengeance, not of forgiveness. If we step out of line, whammo!, we get it, despite what Jesus said about God sending rain and sunshine the just and unjust, indicating equal divine treatment of all.

A secularized corollary to this theological assumption of a punitive force in the universe is a lingering societal belief revolving from once associating sickness or disability with sin: if you get sick or physically disabled, you must have created the conditions to cause that; therefore, you are being punished. When AIDS was first related to promiscuous and drug-abusing Gays, the broader Gay community and society at large might have smugly judged, "Well, that's what you get for living in the fast lane." Now that it's occurring in Gay people and nonGay people who express their sexuality more conventionally, we can't make that judgment. It is true we are learning how much responsibility we must take for our own health, from colds to cancer and heart disease; but we cannot always control our environment filled with stress, toxic chemicals, radioactive wastes, bacteria and viruses.

A second theological assumption commonly held is that suffering or calamity is God's way of speaking to us. How many of us have said in the midst of some major disappointment or tragedy, "What is God trying to say to me?" Or, "why is God doing this to me?" A friend of mine who developed cancer on his way to financial success suddenly felt God was trying to shake him up and challenge his values. NEWSWEEK reported a 26-year-old Haitian who has AIDS as saying, "I think God wants me more close to God, that's why God gives me disease." What is wrong with this understanding? Nothing as long as we understand it as a half truth. Yes, we may hear God's voice in the midst of suffering, but we may also hear God's voice in the midst of joy. Yet history and recently liberation theologies remind us that God is more often the God of the poor, or the oppressed, or the imprisoned, or the hungry, or the dear, lame or blind. I believe this is because such people are more likely searching for God than the self-satisfied rich, established, free, fed, well people most of us are. The self-satisfied Pharisees who objected to Jesus healing the blind man (especially on the Sabbath!) fell into this category, accounting for Jesus' enigmatic response to them: "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind."

A corollary to the half truth that God speaks to us through suffering, calamity or tragedy, is that God actively wills that suffering, calamity or tragedy to happen. In the story of Job, it is Satan who is depicted as the cause of Job's suffering, yet God allows it. In the story of the blind man, Jesus' disciples in effect ask if it is God's will that the man be born blind when they ask if it is punishment for his own sins or the sins of his parents. As God's will unfolds in the story, it is clear rather that it is God's wish for the man to regain his sight, because that is precisely what happens. It is also evident that God would rather have the Pharisees open their figuratively blind eyes.

The third theological assumption prevalent today but threatening to another common concept of an all-loving God is the belief that God is all-powerful. God is in control, in control of personal and global destiny. Someone dealing with a serious illness in our congregation had finally relaxed his fears in the faith that all was in God's hands, when suddenly a leader in the congregation was wantonly murdered. What happened to God's controls? If God was in complete control, we would feel forced to conclude that God murdered this man. But that sounds ridiculous. Well, then, that God sat back and allowed this man to be murdered. Preposterous! Our belief in an all-loving God will not allow us to believe such nonsense! It would seem that in a world in which evil, pain and suffering exist, God could not be both all-loving and all-powerful. I think most people would more readily surrender belief in an all-powerful God in favor of belief in an all-loving God.

Perhaps we incorrectly understand the notion of "power," associating it with control, manipulation and even coercion. Hindu thought offers the idea of a "love force" which can overcome evil with good, but is not manipulative or controlling. For Christians, this is incarnated in Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected. The Christian belief in an all-loving God willing to suffer in Jesus Christ on a cross to bring the reconciliation of the world is the story of God's willingness to avoid

continued on page 5

FIRST VISIT

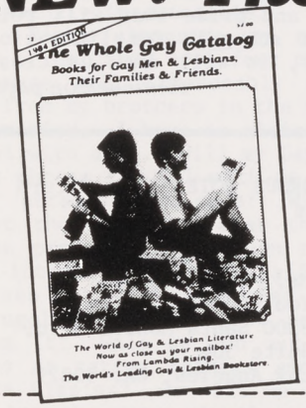
Mary Magnum
St. John's MCC

In through the door it walked –
A soul overflowing with
Confusion, anger, fear, –
Distrust, doubt, ignorance –
Pain and loneliness –
Like a piece of gum
Stuck under the table.
Isn't there someone
Who will love me
Accept me
And hold me
Until the tears go away?
Then through the door
Came a warm, sweet-smelling breeze.
Moments of hesitation
But then an embrace
In the name of the One who cares.
Love for me sent
Through God's messenger as
I received a peace
Shared with a sister in Christ.
Surely there is a spirit in this place,
In voices raised in LOVE and praise
LOVE concerns and prayers
LOVE returned through gifts
The LOVE of arm in arm
Confessional LOVE of our Creator

LOVE, LOVE, LOVE
Surrounded, accepted, filled
Touched, embraced, shared –
But then the greatest blessing –
God's special gift just for me
In the celebration
Of Jesus' death and rebirth.
The renewal of my forgiveness
And remembrance of God's love
The symbols of bread and wine –
A moment in special sharing
Words of encouragement and joy
And the gentle kiss of peace –
Sent out to a world
That doesn't always understand
But for now being understood
That I am a child of my God.
The circle of unending love
With hands joined toward the Heavens.
The icy bonds began to melt
As the warmth of Christian love
Overflowed the bounds of the inside
And gushed over the outside
Running down as tears of joy.
I saw in new brothers and sisters
The peace and warmth of real love.
So out through the doors
Walked a soul –
Warmed, encouraged,

Included, accepted
Bandaged, nurtured
Held and tenderly loved.
I am thankful that my God's love
Knows no color, age nor gender
And I know forevermore
My God loves me just for me.

NEW! The 1984 Edition
of
The Whole Gay Catalog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human forms of power in terms of manipulation and control in favor of a clearly divine form of power: love. God's way of being all-powerful is to be all loving, even though love may bring God suffering. Christians feel called to express a similar love.

The corollary to the assumption that God is all-powerful in a traditional sense is that God will keep us from suffering if we are good. God will heal us if we change our ways. God will advance us economically if we obey God's laws. God will take care of us and keep us from suffering. Success can be equated with God's favor. Holding this belief, many Christians today fall philosophically in line with the Pharisees, who viewed the man's blindness as God's disfavor. But why then does the book of Job address the central question of theodicy: why do the good suffer? These Christians could learn from Job's equanimity in the face of the temptation to "curse God and die." He rhetorically questioned his tempter, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" The corollary that God keeps the good from suffering contradicts our earlier conclusion that godly loving may bring suffering. It also logically leads to the conclusion that the crucifixion was God's way of spanking Jesus Christ!

Jerry Falwell concludes that acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other diseases are God's way of spanking us. What leads him to this conclusion is a set of assumptions that must be questioned: God is a punishing parent. Suffering people deserve to suffer. Suffering is God's way of speaking to us. God wills us to suffer. God is all powerful. Suffering indicates God's disfavor. God will stop our suffering if we are good.

Jesus himself responded to all these false assumptions about God. He described God as a forgiving parent and representing God: joined himself in the suffering of others as he alleviated it, communicated God's will through teachings and example, suffered himself and manifested God's power in the vulnerability of self-sacrificing love. Jesus Christ was good, and yet he was called to suffer more than most to fulfill his ministry.

Blinded by their law, their outdated theological assumptions, and their self-righteous pride, the Pharisees refused to listen to the blind man's testimony of Jesus and ultimately rejected Jesus himself. The irony of the story of Jesus healing the blind man is that opening his blind eyes revealed the deeper blindness of the Pharisees. Then and now.

aids...

A Gay Man's Health Experience

PART II
By Steve Pieters

I do not like the way A.I.D.S. screams out at me from the page. Capitalizing this acronym for the condition I have reinforces the alarmism around it. Publically, the media scream about it. Privately, people speak about it in terms of great terror and awe. Why give it any more power by capitalizing every letter in the word? Why reinforce the feeling of terror and powerlessness that has grown around this condition? I have it, and I'm handling it. So I am not going to capitalize it anymore. AIDS. I do not want to diminish the seriousness of the situation; I want to diminish the alarmism and the fear surrounding the disease. AIDS.

I am learning more about my disease. First, I have a weakened immune system. Second, I have a third state (of four) cancer of the lymph glands (lymphoma) in the neck, arm pit, and groin. Third, I have an indolent Kaposi's Sarcoma, which at this point is isolated on my right foot, with several lesions on the skin.

One of the most profound aspects of my experience of aids has been the reinforcement of my Gay pride. This arises out of a knee-jerk reaction to the news, which was to feel profound regret about being Gay. I found myself feeling (for a moment) that if I had just stayed in my closet, if I had never come out, if I had never had sex, then I would not have aids, and I would not be facing my mortality quite so soon.

I learned a long time ago that "what if....." questions do not contribute anything to coping with the present. But as I thought these particular questions through, I realized the depth of pride I feel about being Gay. I realized a few things that I want to say as a Gay man with aids.

I live in a time when as a Gay man one of the risks I run is to contract aids. I still choose to live in the Gay community. I get angry at this virus that is killing so many people in my community, but I do not feel guilty about having chosen to come out into the Gay community. I feel greatly blessed to live in a time when there is a Lesbian and Gay community to come out into. I feel fortunate to live in a time when there is a church like MCC where there are thousands of Lesbians, Gay men, and friendly straight people, where I can worship God as the Gay man I was created to be.

I am clearly a Gay junkie. I am in love with the Gay experience. Having aids does not change this. Before I came out, I never even fantasized that there could be anything so wonderful as MCC's, or Gay ghettos, or Lesbian/Gay pride, or Lesbian and Gay choruses and bands, or Meg Christian concerts! I love to shop Gay. I like to spend my time where I know there are going to be lots of Lesbians and Gay men, where it is not strange to see sisters and brothers out and about in the afternoon. I like Gay restaurants, Gay grocery stores, Gay video stores, Gay clothing stores, Gay souvenir shops, Gay gyms and Gay bookstores.

I do have some straight friends, mostly from high school and college days. And I cherish them, especially since they are so rare. However, I have many more Lesbian and Gay male friends. There is so much I can presume with them. There are so many shared assumptions and experiences. And we are different from our straight brothers and sisters. Our perspectives are different.

Many of us have felt different, from our earliest memories of comparing ourselves with straight siblings. I have a hard time understanding Gay folk who put a high premium on seeming just like straight folk, who say, "We're no different, except for whom we sleep with." I believe we are different, beginning with whom we sleep with.

So I enjoy other Lesbian and Gay junkies. I like clones. I like Gay men who like to look Gay, whatever that might mean in terms of clothing or mannerisms or signals. I like women who are proud of being women who love women. Dare I say it? I like faggots and dykes, fairies and fems. I like people who wear the MCC cross on the outside of their clothes, and who are not ashamed of their identity as Lesbian or Gay Christians.

I collect Gay literature. I greatly enjoy the writing of Dennis Altman, Edmund White, Vito Russo, John Rechy, Andrew Holleran, Christopher Isherwood, Felice Picano... They are Gay men like me. They write about and from the Gay experience, interpreting things I have been through and giving my life and my experience meaning and affirmation. They are fascinated by the Gay experience as I am, and they each have a varying talent for describing it and analyzing it. I share their concerns about the divisiveness, the apathy, the commercialism, and the closetedness of many Gay men. Most of all, I enjoy them when they are throughly, unabashedly, and narcissistically Gay.

I am interested to read what they write about aids. My hope is that they will interpret this particular experience of the Lesbian and Gay community in a way that will enable us to continue to celebrate our sexuality, to affirm our pride in ourselves and our community, and to demonstrate the joy of living Gay.

As a Gay man with aids, I have discovered resources of strength and pride in myself which I did not recognize or appreciate until the diagnosis was made. Similarly, as an oppressed community of people faced with a deadly disease, I hope we will discover resources of strength and pride that will reinforce our struggle for liberation. Hopefully, it will draw us closer

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A HUMOROUS NOTE: See Return Address

TO:
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Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA. 90029

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together and strengthen our community in ways we could not have experienced from mere political battles! Perhaps facing this epidemic will finally give us the unity we have been looking for.

Perhaps all this Gay enthusiasm comes from my sense that I need the Gay community so desperately right now. I am counting on the Gay community being there for me in ways that I never have before. Right alongside that hope is the fear that I will be deserted by Gay men, many of whom see me as a walking symbol of death. My fear is founded in the emotional turmoil I experienced when I was first sick with hepatitis a year and a half ago. I found myself confined to my house. I was new in Los Angeles and had not yet developed many friends. I was cared for primarily by Lesbians. Because of this, a few men I did see from time to time became all the more precious to me. Part of the reason that this happened is that women are taught better how to care, to nurture, and to nurse. Many men have been taught to be embarrassed by illness. They do not want to be contaminated by this sign of weakness. Many men have been honest enough to tell me they just do not know how to respond.

I am a Gay man, and that means I love men. I want to be in relationship with men, whether I am well or sick. My Gay pride tells me that this yearning for male companionship is healthy and good. I can celebrate the fact that men fascinate me. When I was confined to my house with hepatitis, I became homesick for Gay men. I missed them terribly, and I worry that this will happen again, now that I have been diagnosed with aids. Because I am a Gay man with aids, I feel an automatic separation from healthy Gay men. As a single Gay man, I yearn for intimacy with men, and fear that they will become increasingly inaccessible.

Right alongside my sense of Gay pride, the, is a fear that this disease will irrevocably separate me from my brothers in the Gay male community. I have no choice but to deal with aids. Will my Gay brothers choose to deal with me and other persons with aids? Will they meet the challenge that this disease presents, and learn new ways of intimacy? Will we allow ourselves to be strengthened by this struggle? Will we grow and learn from it? Will we own our identities as caring fairies and sensitive sissies? Or will we continue to let the women do the nurturing and relationship-building while we Gay men write agendas, spend money and plan parties? Tune in again, folks!...I have a feeling Gay men will deal with it, at least in UFMCC.

I really hate having aids! That is precisely why I am so grateful for the Gay community and for UFMCC. Feeling solidarity with other Gay men and Lesbians sustains me through this. By coming out, I may have opened myself up to the risk of aids, but I also placed myself in communion with a source of life and love, through involvement with UFMCC and the Lesbian/Gay community.

I may not have contracted aids if I had never come out. But the closet would have suffocated me. My spirit would have died. For all the Gay community's flaws, for all our brokenness, for all the risks involved in being out, for any disappointment in the community, I would not miss my Gay experience. I love the Gay community. It is where I want to be. It is where I feel most at home. If one of the costs of being in the Gay community is the risk of aids, then so be it. Even a deadly disease like aids cannot kill my pride in my people. I hope the way we face aids will contribute to our growing sense of solidarity and vitality as a community of loving people.

USOC SUES GAY GAMES AGAIN!!

The United States Olympic Committee has filed a motion in U.S. District Court, San Francisco, seeking over $96,000 in attorneys' fees from the organizers of the Gay "Olympic" Games of 1982. The USOC has accused the sponsoring organization of Gay Games, San Francisco Arts & Athletics, Inc., as well as one of its main organizers and volunteers, Dr. Thomas F. Waddell, of deliberately and willfully infringing USOC's trademark on the word "Olympic." Attorneys for the Gay Games and Dr. Waddell filed opposition to this motion on May 10, 1984. Gay Games '82, held primarily in San Francisco sports venues, attracted over 1300 participants representing 12 countries, 27 states and 179 cities.

Gay Games representatives referred to the recent announcement of the "California Police Olympics," complete with a torch and five interlocking rings symbol, as further evidence that the USOC continues their discriminating attacks on Gay Games organizers while allowing the police and others to use "Olympic" without lawsuits or injunctions.

USOC's motion alleged it spent over $96,000 in litigating to stop the Gay Games people from using the word "Olympic."

LESBIAN BATTERING

The Lesbian Task Force of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is issuing a national call for papers on Lesbian battering. We seek to begin to address Lesbian battering throughout this year (1984), and as part of our initiative, we first would like to solicit personal experiences, the stories of battered lesbians and then, discussion papers on the following topics:

*Services for battered Lesbians (support groups, therapeutic issues and individual counseling, integration of heterosexual and Lesbian women in shelters.

*Self defense in battering situations.
*Power dynamics in interracial relationships.
*What about the batterer?
*Confidentiality: Is the primary responsibility to the battered Lesbian or to the Lesbian community?
*Police and court involvement.
*Political analysis of battering among Lesbians.
*Community response.

Acceptance of an article is not based on your ability to write. These papers should be typed on 8½" x 11" paper, double-spaced, 10 pages maximum. Please submit by August 31, 1984 to:

Arkansas Women's Project
1601 Dennison
Little Rock, Ark. 72202

NCADV is a National Coalition of community based battered women's programs and coalitions and provides a national communication network, a clearinghouse for information and technical assistance sharing for state coalitions and local programs, and a unified national voice toward affecting public policy on issues of concern for battered women.

TOLL FREE NUMBER FOR BATTERED LESBIANS

Lesbians who are battered may now call the National Gay Task Force crisis line at 1-800-221-7044, within New York State call 212-807-6016, for referral to local state services. All callers will be put in contact with members of the Lesbian Caucus of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. All calls will be confidential.

Samaritan

COMMENCEMENT 1984

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Ruby Grammer received her Bachelor's Degree. Ruby grew up in Alabama and has a wonderful home grown southern accent. She came into MCC through Pikes Peak MCC in Colorado Springs, CO. After receiving her call to pastoring in MCC, she began attending Pikes Peak Community College with the intention of meeting Samaritan College's degree candidacy requirements.

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Participating in the Samaritan Graduation Celebration were (front row) Sherre Boothman, Dean of Samaritan College and Ruby Grammer, graduate. (back row) Larry Rodriquez, Samaritan Management Team; Jeri Ann Harvey, Elder; Patrick Mechem, graduate; Troy Perry, Elder; Ravi Verma, Director of Administration; Nancy Radclyffe, Chaplain of Spiritual Life and Clergy Care. (Photo by Paula J. Schoenwether, Editor of Journey)

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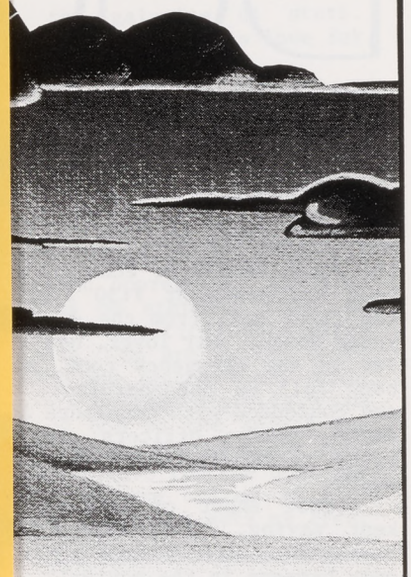

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Universal Peace Night

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Second International Third World Conference

YOU SHALL INDEED GO OUT IN JOY

The Third World Conference theme of UFMCC's Department of Third World Ministries is proud to announce that "UFMCC 2ND International Third World Lesbian and Gay Christian Conference," a Christian Conference for Lesbians and Gays of Color, will be held in New York City, NY, on October 5-7, 1984.

The first conference was held in 1982 in Washington, DC, and was the first of its kind in the world!

The theme for this conference comes from Isaiah 55:12, "You shall indeed go out in joy and be led forth in peace."

In this passage the Prophet speaks of a New Exodus, a time for all of the people of God to stand together to do the work of God's liberation process and experience the magnificent joy of God's love. In response to this call Lesbians and Gays of Color will come together from around the world to develop ways through which we as Christians can make God's love and justice a reality for all people. We will address issues of relevance to our lives as People of Color so that we can collectively work to make a difference - a better, Christian difference - in our lives, our communities and our churches. We will strengthen one another with God's help and guidance, so that more and more of us can COME OUT into the world proudly as Christians and GO FORTH into our communities living full, rich lives, and empowering others to do the same. We are assured that God has, as with the people of Israel, seen our oppression and that God is committed to ending that oppression.

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Santa Monica Civic Auditorium

- Friday, July 27 — Universal Peace Night

Featuring:
Midge Costanza
Mable King
Max Gail
Mary Wilson
New York Break Dancin' Troupe
Linda Hopkins
Edwin Hawkins
Polo
ROVA
Eugene Ballantine

- Saturday, July 28 — Earth Environments Night

Featuring:
Kenny Rankin
Cris Williamson
Jesse Colin Young
Steven Halpern
Floyd Westerman and The Thunderbird Sisters
Max Gail and the Merle Saunders Band
Tony Selvage

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Lavender Unicorn Productions

good news bad news

by Sam Edelman
Pastor, MCC Springfield

"The gospel is bad news before it is good news," Beuchner wrote, and in the dim hospital corridor, the words seemed to echo. The bad news had begun at 2:30 a.m. with the first call from the distraught young woman. Her lover, her first, lay in the emergency room, with a body full of phenobarbitol, while she contended with ambulance attendants, police officers and questions to which there are no answers.

Just short of hysteria, she kept saying, "I'm just a Kansas farm girl. Just a farm girl! This only happens in the movies!"

The bad news--the young woman who lay there had overdosed on lies, game-playing and manipulation, long before she had overdosed on pills. She could have been any one of thousands we pastors see every day--the young and almost too bright, who tap-dance around responsibility without ever landing flat-footed; who avoid truth; who abuse their bodies, their lovers, their gifts, their friends, their God, and, yes, even their pastors.

She could sing with power and perfect pitch. A guitar cradled in her arms seemed much more natural than the tubes which now protruded from them. She claimed to love that Kansas farm girl. The certainty of having run out of manipulative rope had prompted this stupid gesture, this desperate act of coercion, this futile attempt to lay violent claim on someone's love and attention and loyalty. She loved the Kansas farm girl, she said, but you knew she had never gotten around to loving herself.

The gesture, which had become reality in a big way, was useless. The Kansas farm girl, angry at being assaulted with a guilt she didn't create, was on a bus to Kansas almost before the other regained consciousness the next night.

It was after midnight then when the hospital called. The nurse explained that it was your name the patient was calling over and over, as she drifted in and out of half-consciousness. "Could you come right away?" the nurse asked.

You leave the scattered books and pens, the debris of a Bible study not quite finished, to find the hospital room.

It occurs to you that perhaps Moses carried the floor plan of an intensive care unit down from Sinai, in the same manner the plan for the Tabernacle was carried, for every intensive care unit looks the same, smells the same, and, in the pit of your stomach, feels the same.

Is she really that pale or is it the lighting? She calls your name out of her self-inflicted stupor, her self-inflicted rage and repeats, "Sam, help me, help me," through lips swollen and chapped, in syllables barely distinguishable as meaningful sounds.

A few weeks ago she claimed to speak in tongues; now her words are scarcely English. "I have no magic words," you think. "I have only Jesus." The bad news again.

So gifted, so bright, so stupid, so flawed, she lies there. From those to whom much is given, much is required. The bad news again.

"I'm called to preach," she said eight weeks ago. Tonight you just hope she is called to live.

Last Thursday, she asked for the truth and you told her the truth of the bad news. You confronted the ill-constructed web of lies, the transparent games and the abusive, emotional roller-coaster that she forced her friends to ride.

"Misery doesn't love company," you had said, "it demands it!" She laid her own claim to martyrdom, homesteading a state of mind called "victim." You had been indiscreet enough to reveal that there is no wool over your eyes or those of God. You invited her to repent, to rethink, to start anew. You offered to help attempt to save a relationship battered by deceit and a life violated by self-deception. "The truth shall set you free, -- but first it shall make you miserable." The bad news. She didn't want to hear the bad news. She chose instead to run.

As you stand here in the intensive care unit, your own sense of helplessness astounds you. You can't fix it. You can't fix the broken trust, the broken love, the broken spirit. "All have sinned and come short....." The bad news. Tonight you sense again your own place among that "All" and the ways in which you fall short. You just can't fix it.

As you recount the bad news, you gradually become aware that the breathing sounds are more relaxed,

continued on page 11

Samaritan Extended Studies

Jeff Pulling and Samaritan Extended Studies have a new phone number, 203-521-6411. The mailing address remains Box 820, West Hartford, CT. 06107. Contact Samaritan Extended Studies for information on correspondence courses, Adult Education materials, and ministry resources.

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GOD OF DELIVERANCE

by Elaine Hall
DeColores MCC

"And is shall be at that day, saith Holy One, that thou shalt call me Ishi (that is, my Spouse)
And shalt call me no more Baali (that is, my Ruler)
For I will take away the names of the Baalin out of her mouth,
And they shall no more be mentioned by their name."
Hosea 2:18 - 19

As a child, I grew up hearing a lot about the end of the world, the coming of the new heaven and the new earth. I grew up in a pious, fundamentalist home. In my mother's church, the end of the world was depicted as a time when the poor and powerless, coming from heaven with an army of angels to subdue the rich, powerful unrighteous (them).

As time went by, and my idea of God grew until it embraced all of Creation and the Being Who is the Creator, my childhood vision came to seem naive.

Now, I am 33 years old. Each day brings news of new battles, unnatural disasters, new famines, new plagues, all the things my mother warned me about when she read to me out of the Book of Revelation. And now, the message doesn't sound quite so naive anymore. It has the flavor of reality.

Everywhere we see signs of despair. In this century alone, it seems that human-created evil knows no bounds. This century has seen millions of human lives destroyed in two World Wars and countless smaller wars around the world. Human beings have died of starvation and torture in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia and Pol Pot's Kampuchea. And in this hemisphere, thousands of humans die of torture by repressive governments in Central and South America, governments that are supported militarily and economically by our government. African people die of famine by the thousands every day.

Certainly, the current events of our world make it seem that these are the Last Days and that God must soon come to establish the rule of justice and peace on earth. The entire world is engulfed in the flames of greed and injustice and cruelty. We are astonished afresh every day at the apathy we see around us. The people; plants and animals of Mother Earth are dying slow deaths from human-created blights, chemical plagues, radiation poisoning.

And then, there's the Bomb - the Twentieth century's version of "fire from heaven," a horrifying weapon which our country used to destroy Japanese people during World War II.

As Christians, we believe that there is hope, there is an answer for the world's sickness, sin and despair. That hope is found in Christ Jesus, who came to set us free from the power and domination of sin. Scripture tells us that at the end of time, God our Liberator comes to free the world from its sickness, its evil-doing, and God will establish a Realm of perfect harmony between human beings. All war and greed will be overcome. Even predatory animals and their accustomed prey will live together in peace! Truly, this is the Realm of Love and Justice brought into being by the God Who is Love.

Our Scripture reading from Hosea speaks beautifully of God's promise in the imagery of the marriage of God to God's people. The joining in Holy Union of two people is the ideal of the most perfect partnership that can exist because in marriage, as Scripture tells us, "the two become One." What a beautiful revelation that is, that the Eternal, the Holy One, becomes One with us, so that Her purpose and our purpose become the same.

This beautiful promise is the fulfillment of human yearning, indeed, it is the fulfillment of Creation's most cherished dream - union with our Creator. Jesus Christ our Liberator has come to show us the way of Liberation, the way to union with God. This is the free gift that God gives to all of us who are born of God. This gift is God's truth and God's love.

There is a great need in the world now, a great need in the Church, to respond to God's call to justice and liberation. We who are Christians have been shown God's love completely in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit Who dwells with us in love.

To follow Christ is to feel God's love for all people who suffer injustice and cruelty. To follow Christ is to feel God's tender love and caring for our animal and plant sisters and brothers also.

God loves and cherishes all of Creation: Mother Earth and all her children, Sister Moon, Brother Sun and all the galaxies of stars. There is no limit to God's love for Her Creation.

In these days which may be the "last days," the time of great testing, the time before the creation of the new heavens and new earth, we who follow Christ are called to demonstrate God's love for all Creation. We are called to show God's righteous anger at all injustice and oppression, the sins that rob us of eternal life. We are called to practice God's mercy and patience. We are called to be peacemakers and teachers and healers. We are called to proclaim the judgment of God or the unjust and we are called to proclaim the Good News of God's love for the poor and oppressed. We are called in witness to the Truth Who sets us free.

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continued from page 10

more restful. She thrashes less and the next time she calls your name, it is stronger, with more recognition and meaning.

Within a few hours, the move is made out of the I.C.U. into a regular room, where death no longer hovers. Here there are windows. Here there is evidence of a city beyond these walls. Here day begins to intrude. Here you begin to hear the whispered answer.

The prayer that had begun in you hours ago now vibrates with the reassurance that God is not willing that any should perish.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life" -- the good news. The good news whispers that with God all things are possible. Where there are two or more gathered, there am I. The One who cast out demons and gave sight to the blind and made the lame to walk and who conquered death is still doing it, still rolling away stones, and emptying tombs -- even tombs of self-hatred -- still casting out the demons of deceit, still proclaiming liberty to the captives, even those held captive by their own lives.

The sun comes up (Or, is it "The Son comes up?" you wonder.) and the tubes gradually disappear, and as her eyes clear, you speak. "I don't have any magic words. All I have is Jesus" -- the good news.

"The gospel is bad news before it is good news" --but the final word is that IT IS GOOD NEWS, to those who will believe, and even to those who sometimes doubt.

fellowship news

our journey

25TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Jack Hubbs and Rev. James E. Sandmire, pastor of the Golden Gate MCC of San Francisco, in celebration of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of their Holy Union, were hosted at a formal reception on June 17, 1984, following the morning worship service at the church.

BUILDING FUND DRIVE BEGINS

The Board of Directors of Divine Redeemer, Metropolitan Community Church of Glendale announced that because the church has lost its lease the congregation must now relocate. After two years at the same location the owners of the church property is selling it. Today Divine Redeemer is on a month - to - month rental lease and will need new worship facilities.

Divine Redeemer will be conducting an aggressive fund raising drive beginning with a Fund Raising Letter to be sent out later this month. Additional activities include monthly pancake breakfasts, Raffles, involvement in CSW, Pioneer Days and the Sunset Junction Street Fair. The church believes that their most important asset is you, the members of our community and needs your kind donations which are tax deductible.

For those donating $100 or more, your name will appear on a plaque to be placed inside the new church. For more information or if you wish to send a donation please write: Divine Redeemer, MCC, 346 Riverside Dr., Glendale, CA 91204 or call (818)500-7124.

* * * *

Divine Redeemer MCC has announced the program for Spiritual Renewal Week slated for July 11th through July 15th. On July 11th, 12th and 13th Rev. Cisneros-Hunt of MCC Detroit will conduct the services. On July 14th, Son Lite, the Spiritual Gospel Choir of MCC Long Beach will perform the services. All this is preceded by an all you can eat Spaghetti Dinner. To conclude Spiritual Renewal Week on July 15th the Rev. Cisneros-Hunt of Detroit will once again conduct services at 10:00 a.m..

Rev. Joyce Setala

CHRIST THE LIBERATOR SAYS GOODBYE TO PASTOR

The dissolution of a Pastoral relationship is often a painful and traumatic experience for Pastor and Congregation alike. But with proper care a grieving process can be established to help express the strong feelings of loss, frustration, anger and abandonment, as well as love, on both sides.

One good way to reflect on the past years of relationships is to celebrate at a dinner before the pastor leaves. In our case at MCC-CTL we are losing our pastor and associate pastor, the Rev. Joyce Setala and Rev. Carol Wier. In addition Joyce's daughter Joanne, who the congregation has grown up with and found as a bright moment in their lives will also be leaving.

Our Board worked jointly with our Deaconite to establish a Testimonial Committee. We sent out invitations to not only our own church membership but to other churches and community organizations that our pastors had been involved with. The Unitarian Church where we meet allowed us to use their facilities. A list of people was established to offer presentations to honor Joyce and Carol and Joanne. There were reflections on relationships, songs and some roasting along with the toasting. The members of the church hosted, cooked and cleaned for the over 60 guests.

Friends from the Women in Religion Task Force, NOW, New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition, New Jersey Voters for Civil Liberties and, of course, brothers and sisters from other UFMCC fellowships came to share tears, both of joy and sorrow, Joyce and Carol will be sorely missed!

BRETON DELIVERS INVOCATION

Rev. Paul Breton, Pastor of New Covenant MCC in Garden Grove (CA), was invited to represent this congregation in delivering the invocation to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

According to Rev. Breton, "This event is an honor and privilege for the members and communicants of New Covenant MCC. Who would have thought 10 years ago that a civil body would invite a local MCC to be represented in such an august position. This is a small mark of the distance that we in the UFMCC have traveled over the years. What is amazing is that we were invited to deliver an invocation in the very same city in which Rev. Perry was terminated as Pastor for being a homosexual. The day will come when invitations such as these will be extended as matter of course to our congregation.

4TH ANNUAL RETREAT

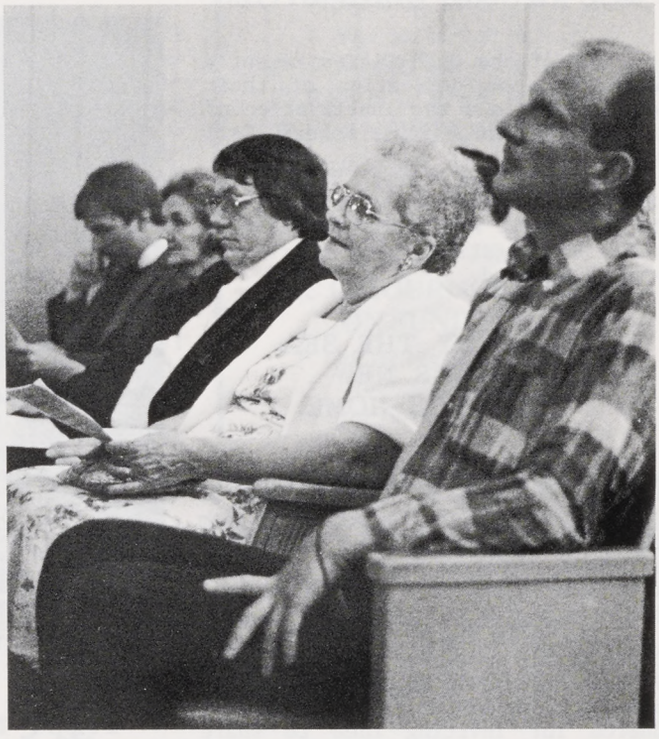
About 60 members and friends of MCC San Antonio participated in the church's fourth annual retreat May 4-6 in Kerrville.

The three-day affair included discussion sessions and free time for individuals to relax.

Speaking at Saturday night's session was David Burkett, communication and management consultant. Burkett, who taught at Trinity University for 20 years before beginning his consulting work full time, has written two books, Declare Yourself: Discovering the Me in Relationships and Very Good Management: A Guide to Managing by Communicating.

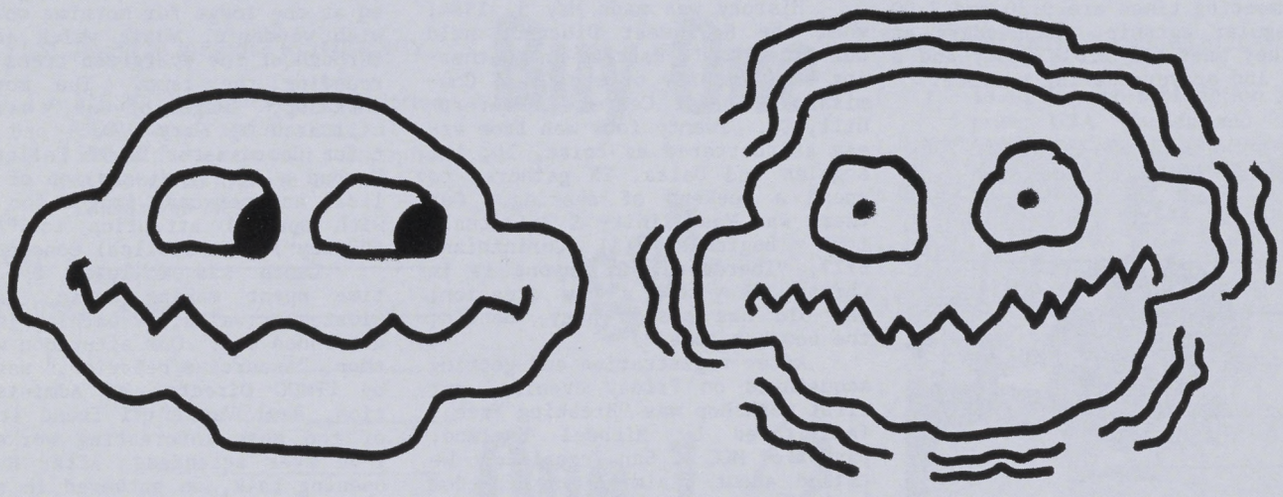
Student Clergy Judy Seitz preached at Sunday morning's service after Deacon Mary Banghart led the sunrise service.

COMMENCEMENT



Mixed Blessings

Cory Allison



FIRECRACKERS SEEM TO HAVE THE SAME EFFECT ON YOU AS EARTHQUAKES!

JERRY FALWELL SAYS:

"Look at the Metropolitan Community Church today - the Gay Church - almost accepted into the World Council...National Council of Churches. Almost. The vote was against them. But they will try again and again until they get in. And the tragedy is that they would get one vote. Because they are spoken of here in Jude as being brute beasts - that is going to the baser lust of the flesh to live immorally and so Jude describes this as apostasy. Thank God this vile and satanic system will one day be utterly annihilated and there will be a celebration in heaven."

From a Sermon on the TV Program "Old Time Gospel Hour" by Rev. Jerry Falwell, President, Moral Majority.

TROY PERRY SAYS:

No, Jerry, that's not what Metropolitan Community Church is like because

We are a caring, loving group of people.

We have created a 60-minute television documentary to confront those kind of lies, and others made by people like you who preach that we, as Lesbians and Gay males are brute beasts, not people.

Our documentary portrays the lives of women and men in the Gay community praying for and struggling to secure freedom and liberation for all people...teachers...Cuban Refugees...Third World People...persons with AIDS...Gay parents...the churched and unchurched...youth and seniors...sisters and brothers around the world who seek peace and prosperity. We have shared on tape the truth that spirituality and sexuality are compatible.

Mr. Falwell, I am asking my friends for help to show it like it is. I am asking them to please send their tax-deductible donations to me to get this message on the air. And it will be on the air because my friends care.

GOD, GAYS & THE GOSPEL: THIS IS OUR STORY. A television presentation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

Send your tax-deductible donations to:

Reverend Troy D. Perry
UFMCC Media Fund
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304
Los Angeles, Ca. 90029

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO ANSWER JERRY!

- ☐ *AN ENABLER: Minimum donation of $50.00 per year*
- ☐ *A SPONSOR: Minimum donation of $100.00 per year*
- ☐ *A CONTRIBUTOR: Minimum donation of $500.00 per year*
- ☐ *A PARTNER: Minimum donation of $1,000.00 per year*
- ☐ *I cannot join at this time, but keep me on your mailing list.*
- ☐ *Enclosed is my donation to help defray costs.*

Name _____

Address _____